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the editor quotes a journal which distinctly states that Verne is a pen-name, he should surely mention that the quoted statement is contrary to fact. He writes in a note: "So far as I know at present" the statement in Johnson's *Cyclopædia* is correct. Why did he not state *definitely* which of his three conflicting sources contained facts? His note (quoted later) left me in doubt as to the nationality of Verne, for the note shows clearly that the editor was uncertain at the time of writing. In order to settle the point of nationality for my pupils I consulted various dictionaries of pseudonyms and wrote to M. Verne. The fact that the author was "not mentioned" in those dictionaries of pseudonyms dispelled doubts raised by the editor, and M. Verne's pleasant letter⁴ is evidence enough that "the dictionaries and catalogues cited by Mr. Symington" are not his only sources for the biography of contemporaries.

Dr. Lewis closes his rejoinder with irony which would perhaps be more effective if its point did not lie in the fact that my printed statement was misquoted. Surely he must have seen the importance of the bracketed numerals in my sentence "this (1828) is the correct statement," and yet he quotes the sentence, but omits the date!

Dr. Lewis thinks that when my remarks are compared with his biographical note most editors will agree with him "in thinking that such criticism is more careless, to say the least" than his note appears. Perhaps it will be well to quote, without omission, that part—the only part—of the Biographical Note in which allusion is made to the birth and nationality of Verne.

[BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE.]

The material already in existence for Jules Verne's life is most meagre and contradictory. In the *Supplement to the Encyclopædia Britannica* (iv, p. 734), for example, we read that he was born at *Nantes* on the 8th of February, 1814. According to Johnson's *New Universal Cyclopædia* (iv, p. 1137) he was born at *Nantes* on the 8th of February, 1828.⁵ *The Dial* (xiv, p. 239), on the other hand, has the following quotation from the London *Literary World*: "Though the literary world does not seem to know it, 'Jules Verne' is only

a pen-name. The novelist is by birth a Pole—a native of *Warsaw*—and his real name is Olchewitz. When he began to write he adopted the expedient of translating the initial syllable of his family patronymic (which in English means 'beach') into its French equivalent, and in this way he got 'Verne'."

The estimates of the value of his works apparently differ to a like degree.

⁵ So far as I know at present, this is the correct statement].

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THE NOVEL AND THE STORY.

TO THE EDITORS OF MOD. LANG. NOTES.

SIRS:—The criticism passed by Dr. Deering, in your November number, on my attempt to distinguish the novel from the story seems to me to be well-founded in theory and justified by facts; for instance, in the case of *Lazarillo de Tormes*, which had occasioned me considerable perplexity. My own differentiation between the two had never been satisfactory to me, but intent only on tracing the one kind, I neglected to look into the essence of the other. Since Dr. Deering privately brought the matter to my attention some months ago, I have had no opportunity to test historically his definition of the story; nor is there in Cleveland sufficient material available for the purpose. But some questions arose while I was reading mediæval literature with the origin of the novel chiefly in view, which may be worth while to state.

One noticeable feature of the literature which tended to make up the romance of chivalry—the epic literature, roughly speaking—is that it was not used to any great extent by the later story-tellers. Even the *romans d'aventure*, which, in many cases, require but a prose form to make them excellent stories, are hardly ever drawn upon—so far at least as known manuscripts indicate. Indeed there would seem to be an almost conscious avoidance of the domain of the novel by the partisans of its lighter rival. The conclusion would be then that the ancestor of the story is not the same as the progenitor of the novel, and therefore that the essential difference between the novel and the story is inherited from a previous stage of existence, the poetical stage. This conclusion may be arbitrary, depending

⁴ Published M. L. N., x, 305.

on insufficient premises. Investigation will determine whether it is hasty or not.

This negative statement, as to what are apparently not the sources of the story, may be supplemented by a positive one as to its probable progenitors. The earliest compilation of stories which became popular in Europe is the Latin collection *Disciplina clericalis*, of Petrus Alphonsus. It was made up of moral tales taken from Arabian writers. This organized invasion of the West by Oriental parables was aided by the many scattered anecdotes which pilgrims, crusaders or merchants brought from the East, and by shorter collections in manuscript, such as the one passing under the name of *The Seven Wise Men*. With their moral summaries lopped off, all these narratives may have been made acceptable to the unlettered people.

Still the appetite for stories was not created in western Europe by these wanderers from distant lands. The poem known as *le Pèlerinage de Charlemagne* is abundant proof to the contrary, not to mention many other early intimations of the same spirit. This native liking for amusing episodes soon found literary expression in that form of poetry called *fableau*, which appeared in France by the middle of the twelfth century.

Now the first prose stories in the vernacular of which we have any evidence are to be found in Italian compilations of the last part of the thirteenth century. The earliest of these, which goes by the name of *Dodici Conti Morali*, contains eight stories, some certainly and others presumably the abridgment of French *fableaux* or poetical *contes dévots*. The *Conti di Antichi Cavalieri*, a little later in date, is more historical in theme and summarizes for the most part longer French poems, while the *Novellino* of about the same period is a much more ambitious collection of narratives from Latin and Italian sources as well as French. These tales were the precursors of Boccaccio's *novelle*. They prove that already, half a century and more before his day, it was the fashion to reduce the episodic poems of France to prose form, and multiply the narratives thus obtained by like themes gleaned from other literatures.

The question then is whether the prose ver-

sions of the French *fableaux* gave the model for these Italian *novelle*, just as the prose romances of the Breton cycle became the starting-point for the romances of chivalry. The tone of the *novella* is certainly akin to the tone of the *fableau*, though it rises at times to the more respectable tale of moral instruction. If the story began with the *fableau* it assimilated to itself all the lighter (in theme or form) fiction of the day, even to the reduction to a literary narrative of the more notable experiences of contemporary life. The *fableau* spirit would seem to prevail with Boccaccio, and yet the larger part of his *Decameron* he undoubtedly owed to entirely different sources. Possibly further discoveries of manuscripts, or the publication of what are already known but still neglected, may throw some light on the problem. Yet it would seem as though we have enough established facts to understand why the story differs from the novel in quality, as Dr. Deering urges, and not in quantity, as I affirmed. It is because their literary ancestors belonged to different clans.

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CENTRAL MODERN LANGUAGE CONFERENCE.

TO THE EDITORS OF MOD. LANG. NOTES.

DEAR SIRS:—The growing importance of educational interests in the western states has within the last years given rise to several organizations. The instructors of modern languages in western institutions have for some time felt the want of closer coöperation. For natural reasons the meetings of the Modern Language Association have been held almost exclusively in the East; distance and expense have thus deprived a large number of teachers of the direct benefits resulting from a personal acquaintance and a mutual exchange of thought and experience.

The initiative in a movement to provide instructors in the Middle West with the facilities of intercourse and coöperation was taken by representatives of the universities of Kansas, Nebraska, and Iowa. A circular letter issued in May to a number of modern-language men